

cullus, in which Cicero informs us he studied; and her many other establishments of like character. This celebrated Prince, commenced a magnificent library at Constantinople, which was made voluminous and rich by his successors, the Vandalism of Leo Isaurius, subjected it to the torch of the incendiary, and which was but the precursor of the hordes of barbarians also breaking loose from their Northern fastnesses, sweeping over Europe like the Sirrocco of the Eastern desert, leaving destruction, devastation and death alone to mark their track, in common with all that was refined, all that was elegant, all that was classical and chaste; perished those monuments of genius and taste, and many, very many of those accumulated stores of wisdom and science fell a sacrifice at the shrine of vandalism, and were forever lost to the world of letters.

During this dark age of ignorance, and semi-barbarism, what few books that escaped the general destruction of all that was good and great, found shelter, but not always a safe one, in the Monasteries; and science owes no small debt to the Monks of that day, who, with much rubbish and useless material, preserved many works of classic renown, which still live with all the freshness of youth.

The library of Glastonbury Abby, in 1248, contained four hundred volumes, among which were Livy, Sallust, Lucan, Virgil, Claudian and other ancient writers. But no other probably of that age, was so numerous or so valuable, as that of Richard of Bury, Chancellor of England under Edward III, who spared no expense in collecting a library, the first perhaps, that any private man ever formed. He gave the Abbot of St. Albans fifty pounds of silver for between thirty and forty volumes.

The Academical library of Oxford in 1300, consisted of a few tracts kept in chests under St. Mary's Church.

Louis IX, formed one at Paris, in which it does not appear that any work of elegant literature was found; at the beginning of the fourteenth century only four classical manuscripts existed in this collection of Cicero, Ovid, Lucan and Boethius. About this period, an ardent zeal for the restoration of ancient learning began to display itself. The public libraries assumed a more respectable footing. About the close of the fifteenth century, Pope Nicholas IV, laid the foundation of the celebrated library of the Vatican, which now contains according to D'Haussez, eight hundred thousand volumes and thirty-eight thousand manuscripts.

Cosmo de Medicis established the one at Florence. It would occupy too much space and time to enumerate even the larger libraries at present established in Europe. Your committee will but refer to a few of the most celebrated, and first in order stands the Royal library at Paris, which was commenced by Francis I. augmented under the fostering care of that great man Cardinal Richelieu, and perfected by M. Colbert; it contained in 1835 no less than 626,000 volumes and 80,000 MSS. and has been according to M. Balbi, a learned statistical writer, since 1835 augmenting at the rate of 8,000 volumes annually.